

Listing of the Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended): A method of manipulating blanks in a machine for packing smokers' products wherein the blanks are stored in a magazine and are associated with collars at an assembling station prior to confinement in outer envelopes jointly with packs of smokers' products, comprising the steps of:

transporting successive collars of a series of collars from a source to the assembling station; and

conveying successive blanks from the magazine, along a predetermined path, and ~~on to~~ onto the assembling station so that each blank reaches said station while a collar is at a standstill thereat, including positively guiding each blank along each portion of said path, and feeding each blank into a stationary guide of a pocket of said station.

Claim 2. (Canceled).

Claim 3. (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of delivering to said station a series of successive packs, positioning each pack at said station in a manner such that at least a portion of a blank at said station is disposed between the pack and a collar, and jointly evacuating the pack, the blank and the respective collar from said station.

Claim 4. (Original): The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of terminating said step of positively guiding upon completed delivery of each of said series of successive packs to said station.

Claim 5. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 4, wherein said terminating step includes applying pressure to the blank at said assembling station.

Claim 6. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 3, wherein said conveying step includes terminating said step of positively guiding upon completed delivery of each of said series of successive packs to said station.

Claim 7. (Original): The method of claim 6, wherein said evacuating step further includes introducing each pack, together with a blank and a collar, into a pocket of an indexible packing conveyor.

Claim 8. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein each of the blanks is a coupon.

Claim 9. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein each of said conveying steps includes conveying a blank to a position beneath the collar at said station.

Claim 10. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein said guiding step includes simultaneously guiding several portions of a blank in said portion of said path.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended): Apparatus for manipulating blanks in a machine for packing smokers' products wherein the blanks are stored in a magazine and are associated with collars at an assembling station prior to confinement in an outer envelope jointly with packs of smokers' products, comprising:

means for transporting successive collars of a series of collars from a source of

collars to the assembling station;

means for temporarily maintaining each collar at said station in a predetermined position, said means for temporarily maintaining including a device having at least one pocket;

means for conveying a succession of blanks from the magazine, along a predetermined path, and ~~on to~~ onto said station so that each blank reaches said station while a collar is at a standstill thereat in said predetermined position thereof; and

guide means for positively guiding each blank at least along a portion of said path, said guide means including a stationary guide that guides each blank at said at least one pocket.

Claim 12. (Original): The apparatus of claim 11, wherein a collar dwelling at said station in said predetermined position thereof is located at least in part at a level above a blank at said station.

Claim 13. (Currently Amended): The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said ~~means for temporarily maintaining includes a device having~~ at least one pocket is located beneath the blank at said station, said guide means being arranged to releasably hold a blank at said station against unintentional entry into said pocket.

Claim 14. (Original): The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising means for moving a blank at said station from said guide means into said at least one pocket.

Claim 15. (Original): The apparatus of claim 14, further comprising means for delivering packs into the at least one pocket at said station.

Claim 16. (Original): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said moving means is arranged to push a blank at said station from said guide means toward the pack in said at least one pocket.

Claim 17. (Original): The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said guide means is spaced apart from the collar at said station.

Claim 18. (Original): The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said conveying means includes at least one wheel and at least one suction head on said at least one wheel.

Claim 19. (Original): The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising means for separating blanks from said at least one suction head not later than at said station.

Claim 20. (Original): The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the blanks include coupons.

Claim 21. (Currently Amended): An apparatus for manipulating blanks in a machine for packing smokers' products wherein the blanks are stored in a magazine and are associated with collars at an assembling station prior to confinement in outer envelopes jointly with packs of smokers' products, comprising:

means for transporting successive collars of a series of collars from a source to the assembling station; and

means for conveying successive blanks from the magazine, along a predetermined path, and ~~on to~~ onto the assembling station so that each blank reaches said station while a collar is at a standstill thereat, including positively guiding each blank along each portion of said path and feeding each blank into a stationary guide of said station.

22. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said stationary guide has two lateral guide portions spaced from one another on either side of said pocket.

23. (New) The method of claim 5, wherein said stationary guide has an opening and a bottom part where the bottom part supports the blank in the stationary guide and said moving means exerts a force through the opening in order to expel the blank from the stationary guide.

24. (New) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said stationary guide has two lateral guide portions spaced from one another on either side of said at least one pocket.

25. (New) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said stationary guide has an opening and a bottom part where the bottom part supports the blank in the stationary guide across the opening and said moving means exerts a force through the opening in order to expel the blank from the stationary guide.

Amendments to the Drawings:

Attached hereto are Replacement Sheets of drawings showing Fig. 1 and Fig. 6. Fig. 1 has been revised to show a series of successive packs 41 and Fig. 6 illustrates a blank 11 disposed between a pack 41 and a collar 19. Pages 20-24 of the specification have been revised to refer to reference numeral 41 depicting a cigarette pack.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets
 Fig 1
 Fig. 6